

Frederick County Listening Session August 1, 2005

Participants Discussion Points

1. Profitability

- Health regs / on-farm
 - Processing regs too
 - Restrictive- need farm input
- Get \$\$ back into AG help at extension, research, univ
Traditional programs need to be funded again- worse for new
- Connecting programs for AG
- Tariffs on imported foods & ag products (maybe yes maybe no)
- Increase margins on commodity products- e.g. - \$\$ for cover crop (how to use crop bio fuels?)
- Nutrient harvesting focus -
 - Could hold soil in place in some areas
 - Need to be allowed to take to harvest
 - People don't participate because of requirements
- Crop insurance- MD could follow PA and subsidize (MD insurance admin)
- Keep \$\$ in crop ins subsidies
- Labor availability- immigration law challenges- caps
- More solutions needed
- Deep H2O port that pays for itself

Honorable Governor Ehrlich, Secretary Riley, good Commission Members,
It is a great privilege to have each of you come to Frederick County to discuss agriculture. My discussion comes from the heart, my family have been directly involved in agriculture since our ancestors settled here.

I. We need AG in MD

- A. Broiler industry is so integrated it touches almost 100% of farms and agri-business. Essential to eastern shore economy.
- B. Dairy industry – Fred. Co has long been one of the top 10 counties essential to western shore economy.
- C. As large as cities are, other large business bring to MD. AG and support our economy would be severely crippled.
- D. We cannot depend on other answers for our needs. Ill, is federal disaster area / what if they were our supplier?

II. AG in MD is headed to shock trauma

- A. It is in trouble
 - 1. Age of farmer – 57 years old
 - 2. Very few young farmers – very few next generation

3. Young farmers can't underwrite the debt to get started out as farm size increases. Even in the family farm.
4. Older generation own land mass.
 - Development – retirement.
 - Encourage all resources to AG preservation.
 - Estate relief – generation to generation.

2. Land Use & Mgt

- Buffers may be required when \$\$ run off
- COC- development focus over farming
- Support small farms as well as large farms- need help
Zoning is running them out
- Up the ante on land preservation
\$ for easement
- Need more solutions than \$\$ easements- change 25 ac rule to better support working land- look at small lots- use less land for some # of houses clustering
- Dramatically increase \$\$ for land preservation
- Zoning issues - expand into alternative such as an equip storage yard in a gran yard- non ag use = no
- Expand def of what's AG
- DEER * Geese resident
 - Add Frederick Co. back into Ag Bill- allow deer hunting on private land
 - Nutrient mgt law- moving target (Bay Fdn)
 - Get numbers to know where to head as a goal
 - Farm @ np what about others? Construction for example
- Education - conflict mgt. is what happens when education is not done
- Need AG districts to keep farms contiguous - bump up \$\$ so someone can buy farms- clusters
- Make regs balanced on fertilizer
- Pay for dur(sp?) damage to crop ins to cover damage

3. Market

- Port @ Baltimore
- More Outlets- competition among buyers
- Bio-fuels- NG
- Follow model of Loudon City in marketing local produce to DC
- Buy local market campaign
- Farmers' markets- daily markets
- Insurance- makes small farmers hesitant because of liability (health regs)
- Market campaign on buy local- schools & such at fair price

- Small butcher shops run out of business
 - Adding farmers' markets- means adding farmer's to sell
 - Ag marketing \$\$ from home sales
- Re: Loudon County

4. Next generation

- Farmers need help to be profitable; get the help back for farmers has to have \$\$
- Competitive interest rates to buy land for farming
- Student Labor- \$600/yr w/o tax \$\$?
- Raise limit to keep paper work down & keep young people interested
- Reduce inheritance tax @ state level- or match federal limits- esp. harsh for farm lands
- Reduce paperwork & put \$\$ to better use, i.e. nutrient mgt \$15mm
- Don't judge good or bad- help instead- \$
- Estate planning assistance can help address land taxes
- Farm safety- Learn to respect farm machinery
- Education re: lawn fertilizer – high school education needs to look at farming of the future- greenhouses, hydroponics, new models in farming & education
- MD AG Foundation- use ag tags--- \$\$ for education--- move to high schools
- What are hurdles for young farmers- know this before \$\$
- Grants for equip safety education ad campaigns
- Ag preservation for young people- critical farms program quickly vs. 5 years
- Who can afford to buy farms- 51% of income (household income) must be farm to qualify preservation to be eligible- % needs to change